



Rookstone Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY284192
Inspection date	07 July 2005
Inspector	Tracy Maria Clarke
Setting Address	Tooting United Reformed Church, Rookstone Road, London, SW17 9NQ
Telephone number	0208 767 2019
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Registered person	Rookstone Play Group
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

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THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rookstone Playgroup was re-registered in 2004, but has been running since 1995. It operates from church premises, and is within close proximity of Tooting Broadway underground station and shops.

The playgroup have daily use of two rooms on the first floor, a small room used for quiet play and a larger group playroom. Children are supervised when using the toilets on the ground floor, as the playgroup share these facilities with other users of

the church premises. A small kitchenette is also provided. There is no outside play area. However, two or three times a week children can access the ground floor hall for physical play activities.

The Playgroup are registered to provide care for 18 children aged 2 to under 5 years of age. There are currently 17 children on roll aged from 2 to 4 years of age. Eleven children aged 3 receive nursery education. Fourteen children attending speak English as an additional language. No children currently have special educational needs.

The Playgroup operate Monday to Friday, term time only, from 10:00 to 12:30. Children attend from the local vicinity and are reflective of the diverse community.

Two staff work directly with the children and both hold relevant childcare qualifications. Students and parents also attend to ensure staffing ratios are maintained.

The group receive support from the Wandsworth Primary Play Association (WPPA) and have access to training through the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from healthy snacks, enjoying a selection of different fruits as part of their morning routine. They are kept healthy due to staff's effective communication with parents, to ensure children's individual dietary needs and cultural beliefs are met. Although children are offered drinks during snack time, they are not able to help themselves to water at other times throughout the morning.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene. They know, for example, to get a tissue to wipe their nose, and to wash their hands after using the toilet. They are encouraged to wash their hands before eating, but the current arrangements do not prevent cross infection, as children all use the same bowl of water. The nappy changing routines include staff wearing disposable gloves and disposing of nappies appropriately. However, children are changed on a mat which is shared with other users of the centre.

Children are able to move freely around the play room, and they can choose to undertake activities which are both active and more restful. A book area provides space for children who want to sit quietly. Children's hand and eye co-ordination is encouraged through activities such as threading, drawing, painting and construction. They enjoy rolling and cutting play dough, moulding sand and pouring water. In the post office they use stamps and ink pads, weights and scales as part of their imaginary play. Children do not have any opportunities to play outside in the fresh air, as there is no access to a playground. They do walk to the library once a month, learning to hold hands and walk safely along the busy main road. They also enjoy running and chasing one another in the large hall. Children learn to throw and catch

bean bags, crawl through tunnels and move their bodies to music tapes, following instructions from staff. However, there are no opportunities for them to climb and balance at varying heights. Children do not learn the importance of physical activity in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, because although staff plan daily activities to encourage children's physical development, these are seldom varied and do not provide sufficient challenge.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play with a range of toys and equipment which are safe, of good quality and developmentally appropriate. They have space to use the toys safely, for example, building construction resources on a play mat and playing with water and sand in height appropriate containers. Children are able to access resources independently as they are well laid out and at their level. During the morning children are encouraged to use resources in a safe manner, and when running around the hall, staff encourage children to go the same way round so as to avoid collisions. Although children are aware of how to use toys safely, they are not given sufficient explanation from staff so they can begin to develop responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised due to effective risk assessment of the premises and the resources. However, the systems used to record visitors and volunteers to the playgroup is not sufficient. Children are protected by staff who are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection procedures and have undertaken relevant training.

Children are kept safe during their arrival and departure, with staff ensuring they cannot leave the premises unaccompanied at anytime. As the premises are shared with other users, children are effectively supervised when using the toilets and ground floor hall. Children develop an awareness of road safety during monthly trips to the library, where they learn to cross the road in a safe manner. Adult to child ratios during outings keep children safe and provide them with good levels of supervision.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident in their relationships with one another and staff. They benefit from resources which are within their reach, and happily link up with other children to play with the toys provided. They enjoy playing with resources such as puzzles, small world toys, sand and water, moving from one activity to another and exploring through play. The routine provides them with opportunities to take part in both large group activities as well as playing on their own or in smaller groups. Children's communication skills are encouraged every day as they enjoy listening to a range of story books and taking part in singing, joining in with repeated refrains. However, the

current routine does result in some children becoming restless after a while, and children have to wait a long time before they can sit down to have a drink and a snack.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have an awareness of the Foundation Stage and are able to plan a range of activities under all areas of learning to encourage children's development. However, they are less confident in their knowledge of the stepping stones, and as a result, they do not make effective use of what they know about children's achievements, to fully encourage individual children to be challenged in their learning. Planning is theme based and includes the activities children take part in under all six areas of learning. On a daily basis the room is also set up with key activities, such as sand and water, play dough, puzzles, construction and home corner resources. However, themes are re-visited year after year and the planning is seldom adapted to provide children with activities which provide greater challenge and motivation.

Children gain some knowledge of the local community through monthly trips to the library and occasional visitors to the playgroup, such as the local police officer. The majority of children who attend have English as an additional language, and staff work with parents to encourage children to learn about others and develop positive attitudes. However, children are seldom taken outside of the playgroup to experience the diverse community first hand. Their sense of time and place is not fully extended because staff rarely plan experiences to encourage them to observe change, or explore and investigate the living world around them. Children learn to communicate effectively through singing and listening to stories, and they enjoy mark making for a variety of purposes; such as using chalk on the black board, drawing around stencils, and pretending to address envelopes in the post office. They are able to find their name card in the morning, with some prompting from their parents, and more able children are beginning to link sounds to letters and are forming recognisable letters.

Children show a strong sense of belonging, separating well from their main carer and greeting the staff and their friends with big smiles. They quickly link up with one another to play with the activities provided, selecting resources independently and initiating their own role play activities. They use their imagination well, and move to music on a regular basis. However, they only have access to musical instruments once a month. Children enjoy taking part in organised craft activities, such as sponge painting a post van and creating a post box collage. However, the craft activities are generally adult led, leaving children less opportunity to create their own designs and select from a wide range of craft resources. Children are beginning to count up to 10 and are able to match and sort some colours and shapes. They enjoy learning about volume and capacity when transferring water and dry sand into different sized containers, and can complete simple puzzles. Children learn about measurement as they place weights on a balance scale, and are measured to see who is the biggest and the smallest in the class. However, staff do not encourage children's mathematical thinking or awareness of calculation in every day play experiences and through effective questioning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children from a variety of backgrounds are warmly welcomed into the playgroup. Although no children currently have special educational needs, the manager has undertaken appropriate training in this area. Children develop positive attitudes to one another through festival celebrations and when playing with resources which depict positive images of diversity. Children with English as an additional language benefit from the parent rota system, which encourages parents to take turns to stay at the playgroup and offer support to children. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. On a daily basis staff share information with parents about the activities undertaken, and encourage parents to take an active role in fundraising and outings to the library. Although parents receive an end of year report about their child, they do not have access to the written observations carried out by staff in relation to children's learning, and regular opportunities are not provided for parents to share information with staff about their child's progress.

Children are generally well behaved, taking turns when playing games and sharing resources with one another. Staff remind children of the expectations of the setting, although they sometimes fail to provide sufficient explanation so that children begin to take greater responsibility for their own behaviour. There are also occasions when some children become restless due to the routine of the morning and repeated activities.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Recruitment procedures safeguard children's welfare, ensuring that staff working with children are suitable to do so, and that regular students and volunteers are never left alone with children. Children benefit from being cared for by staff who have undertaken training in health and safety, first aid and child protection. However, staff have undertaken limited training in relation to the foundation curriculum, which affects their ability to plan a wider range of activities which challenge children.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff meet regularly with the management committee, who have devised clear roles and responsibilities in relation to the running of the nursery. However, the systems to evaluate planning and teaching have not yet been clearly devised. Both permanent staff hold a relevant childcare qualification, and adult to child ratios are good due to the number of parents and students attending on a daily basis, to offer support to children. Appropriate policies and procedures help to keep children healthy and safe. However, the organisation of record keeping is haphazard, so that documents cannot always be retrieved quickly. Accident recording, and systems of recording staff, children and visitor's daily arrival and departure times are also poorly maintained. Overall however, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides a service.

Improvements since the last inspection

Four key issues were made at the last education inspection.

Children are now fully encouraged to write for a variety of purposes, link sounds to letters, begin to recognise their own name and attempt to form recognisable letters. Although children have more access to programmable toys, they are still not provided with sufficient opportunities to explore living things. Staff are now more consistent in their approach to managing children's behaviour, but there are still occasions when children become restless due to the routine and activities provided.

No progress has been made in relation to staff making effective use of observations to plan for children's next stage of learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- introduce more effective systems for planning and evaluating activities, so that children take part in a wider range of activities, and resources are used more effectively to extend and challenge children's learning (also applies to nursery education)
- plan a wider range of vigorous activities for children to extend their physical development and develop a positive attitude to maintaining a healthy lifestyle (also applies to nursery education)
- improve record keeping in relation to visitors, staff and children's daily attendance, accidents and children's observations to ensure the efficient and safe management of the provision

- consider more effective ways to share children's progress with parents

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- increase staff's knowledge of the stepping stones so they are more confident in using observations and assessments of what children can do, to effectively plan for each child's next stage of learning
- continue to improve the opportunities for children to develop an awareness of calculation through everyday play activities, to explore and investigate living things and the local community, develop a sense of time and initiate their own creative designs

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